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ABSTRACT

This study uses a comparative case study of two high school teachers' units about the U.S. civil rights movement to explore the construct of subject-specific pedagogy. The research examines each teacher's views of subject matter and learners as a means of understanding and explaining instructional practices. Through that investigation, a number of problems of tensions surfaces, which are considered, along with the implications that subject-specific pedagogy has for educational policy and professional development. This paper is part of the "Fallingwater" policy and practice study, a multi-year examination of the relationships among national, state, and local education reform efforts and school/classroom practices. (EH)

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On Subject-Specific Pedagogy:

Two Teachers; Two Pedagogical Approaches

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On Subject-Specific Pedagogy:
Two Teachers; Two Pedagogical Approaches

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Long thought to be a generic activity, researchers increasingly view teaching as subject-specific. Spawned, in part, by Lee Shulman's work (1987), the assumption behind subject-specific instruction is that teachers "have special responsibilities in relation to content knowledge, serving as the primary source of student understanding of subject matter" (1987, p. 9).

Conceptualized by Shulman and others (e.g., Ball, 1993; Wilson, Shulman, & Richert, 1987; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991), the notion of subject-specific instruction owes much to the thinking of John Dewey. Dewey's interest in subject matter and subject-specific teaching is well-represented in a range of his writings, but perhaps most so in Democracy and Education (1916/1966) and Child and the Curriculum (1902/1956). In Democracy and Education, Dewey attacks the dualism of "method" and "subject matter." "Method," he argues "means the arrangement of subject matter which makes it most effective in use. Never is method something outside of the material" (p. 165; emphasis in original). In Child and the Curriculum, Dewey takes on a second dualism: the distinction between teaching the curriculum and teaching the child. Contrary to common belief, Dewey does not argue for the child over the curriculum. Instead he finds common ground between these poles through the pedagogical vehicle of "psychologizing" the curriculum. A teacher pschologizes the subject matter when s/he finds:

> ...ways in which the subject may become part of [students'] experience; what there is in the child's present that is usable with reference to it; how such elements are to be used; how his [sic] own knowledge of the subject-matter may assist in interpreting the child's needs and doings, and determine the medium in which the child should be placed in order that his [sic] growth may be properly directed. (1902/1956, p. 23)

Dewey concludes that the teacher is "concerned, not with the subject-matter as such, but as a related factor in a total and growing experience" (p. 23).

Strains of Dewey's notion of "psychologizing" the curriculum echo throughout the literature on subject-specific pedagogy. This seem particularly clear in Shulman's (1987) conception of "pedagogical reasoning" which includes "pedagogical content knowledge"--"the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction" (p. 8).

Drawing from Dewey and Shulman, subject-specific pedagogy includes the following features: a) knowledge of the subject matter at hand; b) an understanding of students as learners; and c) a repertoire of instructional representations. Powerful teaching develops when a teacher constructs a classroom environment and a set of instructional practices which represent attention to both subject matter and students.

Researchers are increasingly providing rich descriptions and analyses of life in social studies classrooms (Barton, 1995; Brophy, 1990; Evans, 1990; Levstik & Smith, 1996; VanSledright, 1996; Wilson, 1990; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991). In some sense, however, Dewey's conception of "psychologizing" the curriculum and Shulman's conception of "pedagogical reasoning" have gone unexplored. In this study, I use a comparative case study of two high school teachers' units on the U.S. civil rights movement to explore the construct of subject-specific pedagogy. My first purpose is to look deeply at each teacher's views of subject matter and learners as a means of understanding and explaining his or her instructional practices. Through that investigation, a number of problems or tensions surfaced. Those tensions underlie my second purpose which is to consider the implications the notion of subject-specific pedagogy has for educational policy and professional development.

The Study

This paper comes out of the "Fallingwater" policy and practice study, a multi-year examination of the relationships between national, state, and local education reform efforts and school/classroom practices.

The setting for this study is the classrooms of two social studies teachers who teach in the same suburban high school. The Westwood school district is located in a middle to upper-middle class, predominately white suburban area in New York state. Most students at Westwood High go on to post-secondary education, and many attend elite, private colleges and universities.

The two teachers, Linda Strait and George Blair, were born and raised in the general area, but neither grew up in the Westwood district. Strait is an African American woman in her mid-40's. She holds bachelors and masters degrees in American history. Strait has been teaching for five years (all at Westwood High), following an earlier career as a librarian. She teaches American History to juniors and Participation in Government to seniors. Blair is a European American male in his early 50's. He also holds bachelors and masters degrees in American history, with an additional masters degree in social studies education. Blair has taught at both the middle school and high school level over his 25 year career. He teaches the required junior American History course and some history electives.

The data on which this paper draws come from observations and interviews conducted over a two year period. The curriculum unit under study is the US civil rights movement. I observed each class period the material was taught and took field notes using a semi-structured field guide. I interviewed each teacher twice. The first interview consisted largely of questions related to the teachers' knowledge and interpretation of the state social studies framework and, if and how, their classroom practices had changed over time. The second interview focused on the civil rights unit. Here I asked how the teachers decided what to teach, what they hoped students would learn, and how, if at all, this unit was different from the previous year's. Questions for both interviews came from semi-structured protocols; all interviews were audio-taped and transcribed.

My analysis reflects the interpretative tradition within qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Erickson, 1992). To analyze these data I coded field notes and interview transcripts with three general interests in mind. One was the knowledge represented in each unit and how each teacher talked about the relevance of that information for students. A second interest was in how each teacher viewed his or her students as learners. My third interest

focused on the instructional representations used. Here I looked at the pedagogical approaches taken and the activities and assignments made. My initial analysis yielded two themes. One was the power of each teacher's views of subject matter and learners on his or her pedagogy. The second was the notion that these views were complex and often problematic. I conceptualized these problems as "tensions" around subject matter and learners.

Subject-Specific Pedagogy: Two Approaches to Teaching the Civil Rights Movement

The notion of subject-specific pedagogy provides a valuable means of understanding teachers' instructional practices. As we will see, George Blair and Linda Strait are very different teachers, in large part, because they hold disparate views of subject matter and learners. Understanding their practices, especially the differences between them, is interesting and potentially useful on several levels. In this paper, I present cases of each teacher's instruction around the U.S. civil rights movement as a means to explore the tensions that develop as they construct teaching practices based on their views of subject matter and learners. I then look at the implications of those tensions for educational policy and professional development.

Framing a Master Narrative: The Case of George Blair

Five minutes into a typical George Blair class, one is immediately struck with conflicting images. On the one hand, this looks like a stereotypical social studies class--a teacher standing at the front of the room talking, an overhead projector with outline notes from textbook, students silently copying notes. This image is so common as to become a caricature. Listening to Blair talk, however, confounds that image for he does not parrot textbook knowledge. Instead, he crafts a story or narrative based in "facts" but using elements of a story grammar including complex characters, interesting plots, rising and falling action, and resolutions.

A Vietnam-era veteran, George Blair is a self-described "old protester from the sixties." With undergraduate and masters degrees in history, Blair knows the subject matter of US history. He also has a masters degree in social studies education. In that program, Blair learned about a number of instructional approaches. He rejects most of them, however, in favor of the lecture. "I use lecture method," he said, "I use it the best. I've become fairly good at it." Blair disdains talk

about instructional variety, performance assessments, and the like. He knows that he is a master storyteller, that his students generally do well on the state Regent's test[1], and that educational "fads" come and go. Like other teachers, he acknowledges that a range of factors influence his practice (Grant, 1996; forthcoming; McCutcheon, 1981; Thornton, 1988). One clear place to start understanding his instructional decisions vis-a-vis his teaching of civil rights, however, is through his views of subject matter and learners.

Teaching Civil Rights in the Context of the Times and the Textbook

When I asked George Blair if I could observe a unit he does on the civil rights movement in the US, he explained that he does not do "a unit as such." Instead, he addresses civil rights issues and events as they occur in the chronological order his textbook presents. He invited me to sit in on his up-coming Eisenhower unit as civil rights would play a part in his lecture.

After some welcoming chat with entering students and a brief review of the previous unit test, Blair began the first class of the Eisenhower unit with introductory remarks comparing Dwight Eisenhower ("the hero of World War II....He was loved by the GIs and the American public") and his opponent in the 1952 and 1956 presidential elections, Adlai Stevenson ("Stevenson was considered an egghead...you call them nerds today....Also Stevenson was divorced and in the 1950's that was not as socially acceptable as it is today...Stevenson was very nice. I liked him"). Quickly concluding that the two elections were "essentially the same race....Stevenson doesn't stand a snowball's chance in hell," Blair offers a glimpse into the principal or framing narrative of this unit: how Dwight Eisenhower negotiated dilemmas in foreign and domestic policy:

> Eisenhower was conservative....But it will blow up in his face...He made several appointments to the Supreme Court, but one at least is very liberal...and (emphatically) that shocks the hell out of Eisenhower...Remember there was tremendous pressure...Very serious things happen and early on in Eisenhower's presidency...He's hit in the face with the Brown decision...Eisenhower disagrees, but he has to enforce it and he does...and there is a serious confrontation in the South....

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[1] The high school-level Regents test in U.S. History combines multiple-choice questions with essays. Passing this test has been long considered an indication of quality. A less rigorous test, the Regents Competency Test (RCT), was created in the 1980's for students who sought a local diploma instead of a Regents diploma. The RCT is being phased out in the latest round of state educational reform.

Of George Blair's approximately 50 students (two classes), 10 failed the Regents test this year.

Eisenhower also confronts the Soviets....We hate the Soviet Union, we fear the Soviet Union...(dramatically) We've got the H-bomb, but we're scared as hell. So the foreign policy John Foster Dulles comes up with...[is] a sad state of affairs....It's called massive retaliation...[and it means] any aggression by the Communists and we would retaliate with everything we have, massively, with everything we have...

With that set-up, Blair launched into a lecture on US foreign policy:

Now the book doesn't tell you this....In the 1956 Hungarian Revolution...the Hungarians ask for our help and we don't give it to them....(incredulously; loudly) Massive retaliation? We aren't going to retaliate at all! It's just sword rattling and it doesn't make any sense. We're not going to blow up the world. Who're we trying to kid?...Massive retaliation; but we can't do that...Massive retaliation...what sense does that make? (quietly) But it shows how afraid we really are....

John Foster Dulles uses the idea of brinkmanship...pushing the Soviets to the brink of war....But how far can you push?....The Soviets do the same thing....Much of the Cold War, we push and push and push...as far as we possibly can and there's tension, and stress, and anxiety. There's not a lot of fighting, but there's a helluva lot of tension, stress, and anxiety. (A student, David, asks, "Were any shots fired?") Yes...Korea, Vietnam...between the US and the USSR? No...they never attack one another directly....

Here we see several elements of George Blair's narrative instructional style. The story Blair constructs is rooted in standard historical fare: personalities (Richard Nixon, John Foster Dulles), policies (massive retaliation, brinksmanship), and events (Cold War, Hungarian Revolution). He occasionally refers to a point listed on the overhead notes and his stories always contain factual elements represented in the notes. But Blair goes beyond simply connecting these ideas. Instead, he uses a focus on individuals' actions and a variety of oratorical means--vocal inflection, emotion, personal reaction, rhetorical questions--to build a dramatic story of tension and fear between the US and USSR. And like most storytellers, Blair delivers the Cold War as a monologue, punctuated only once by a student question.[2]

It is hard to tell what sense students are making of all this. All seem intent on copying the outline notes displayed on the overhead projector; few ever look up at Blair and respond to his lecture. It is difficult to imagine, however, that they are not caught up in the story he tells

Day two of the Eisenhower unit begins with Blair talking briefly about US and USSR summits before shifting to domestic policy. Following the overhead notes, he quickly reviews

[2] In fact, David's question is the only substantive question I have witnessed in the many times I have observed Blair's classroom.

government policies toward farming (the Benson Agricultural Act which encouraged farmers to produce less) and, because he has apparently talked about this before, the McCarthy hearings. Blair then announces that the class will go on to "some more interesting things"--civil rights:

> Now we move on to some more interesting things...I remember a lot of this...This is the beginning of the serious civil rights....Now you remember Plessy v. Ferguson of 1896. We did that. Plessy v. Ferguson sets up the idea that the South can segregate blacks and whites as long as the facilities are equal....I told you this even though the book doesn't....In economic terms the south couldn't afford two systems...it was too costly...
>
> The issue is going to come up again....Several decisions will be made [around] equal rights for the black population....In 1953, Eisenhower appoints a new chief justice...and it was not a popular choice....Earl Warren was not a great jurist...he was a politician in California, not an academic in constitutional law. When he goes to Washington he was ignored by some of FDR's appointees [to the Supreme Court]...[he was] ignored, snubbed...(dramatically) And he will change the court to this very day. Warren has a philosophical idea called judicial activism...the process of allowing the Supreme Court to make decisions to help out social issues...This is the first time the court ever did this and (solemnly) it will change the court forever...Warren is a liberal and he will make several major decisions...[for example] the 1954 Topeka, Kansas...Brown v. the Board of Education...
>
> Topeka...had separate black and white schools as all the south did. The Browns wanted to send their daughter to the white school....They can't...so they go to court. The NAACP supported them....The case was presented to the Supreme Court by a lawyer, Thurgood Marshall....[who asks himself] what kind of case can we come up with to stop segregation in schools? Now I've mentioned this before....After much planning, Marshall puts together a defense based on social and psychological evidence. He argued that segregation was hurting black kids....He puts the case together [so that it was] not an issue of constitutionality though Marshall cited the 14th amendment. But the evidence was psychological and social, not legal....And the Supreme Court accepts the argument....The Brown decision overturns Plessy....Brown says that schools, when they segregate, do harm to the black population and segregation must end....(voice rising) and it starts the major movement toward civil rights in the south that continues to today...
>
> After that decision, the south refuses to integrate schools....Little Rock in 1957 is the test...(dramatically) God, I remember this on TV, too, kids....Seven to eight black children try to integrate Central high school....they're prevented...(incredulously) Orval Faubus, the Governor, refuses to allow the black kids into the school....He sends in the National Guard to prevent them....Eisenhower notified Faubus of the Brown decision....And even though Eisenhower doesn't like the Brown decision...he thought the court overstepped their bounds...But he knows he must enforce the decision....So he sends in the paratroopers, active military....there were more soldiers than students...and they escort the students to class for two years....
>
> (Quietly) One of the young ladies recently published a book...and she talks about the threats on her life....The threats to her life were unbelievable....[She talked about how] the black community took the kids away every summer and put them with black families around the country....This woman lived with a doctor in Los Angeles....She told stories of kids kicking her and pushing her down stairs....(Softly) And when I read this, tears came to my eyes...man's inhumanity to man....

Here, Blair pauses, walks over to the overhead projector, puts up the next set of notes, and then walks back to the right-hand corner of the room. He continues in more matter-of-fact tone, but his voice gradually grows louder and his tone more insistent:

> I don't think we need to spend a lot of time on Rosa Parks....Civil rights just gets going and going and going....Rosa Parks was just a plain, simple lady....She refused to give her seat up to a white man....When the buses were busy, blacks had to move to the back of the bus....Rosa Parks refuses and when push comes to shove, she's arrested....The ultimate threat to blacks was "Don't you know your place?" (Sadly) I know you don't identify with this and I'm glad you can't....[there were so many] gutsy folks...moving toward civil rights...and I hope some day we'll have true civil rights....
>
> (Loudly) What happens? A Baptist minister by the name of Martin Luther King comes to Alabama....He goes on TV [and] says the city will desegregate mass transit or blacks will use their most important weapon, the boycott. They will boycott until integration....In just, less than a year, representatives from the bus system and the government negotiate with blacks and the buses will be desegregated....Blacks will no longer ride in the back of the bus...Blacks were poor so they had to use mass transit...When they didn't use the buses, the companies ran in the red....
>
> (Softly) As I say these things, things go through my mind...very big things. This was a very painful time for both the black and white population...This was not trite, it was earth shattering....I know I'm going through these things quickly, but they are not trite...

That said, Blair ended the focus on civil rights and returned briefly to foreign policy (more talk about John Foster Dulles and massive retaliation, the Hungarian Revolution--the bloody put-down is compared with Tiannemen Square, the creation of Israel and tensions in the Middle East).

In his presentation of civil rights, George Blair uses all the elements of storytelling that surface in his earlier account of the Cold War. His story is faithful to the facts--the Brown v. Board of Education decision, the confrontation at Little Rock, Rosa Parks's action, Martin Luther King and the bus boycott--and to a focus on individuals' actions and experiences (including his own). Again, the facts serve as the threads with which he weaves a dramatic account of black and white tensions, resolutions, and more tensions. He uses his considerable rhetorical skills both to convey both the anxiety of the times and the struggles of individual actors. It is a masterful performance.

In one sense, George Blair is doing what many social studies educators advocate--teaching ideas--in this case, civil rights--in the context of the times. This makes sense as no era is reducible to a single focus. Civil rights is an important piece of understanding the 1950's, but so too is the relationship between the US and USSR. So while some may argue that civil rights gets lost in the

bigger story Blair crafts about the Eisenhower era, others may argue with equal conviction that he is serving the greater goal of a more comprehensive history. By highlighting the Eisenhower presidency, Blair chooses a framework into which he links all the ideas and issues discussed. He might have framed the unit differently around any of several big issues--civil rights being one of them. That he does not makes sense given his view of the subject matter and his students.

Understanding George Blair's Instructional Practice: Subject Matter and Learners

Three features define George Blair's narrative approach. One is the notion of weaving together the U.S. civil rights movement together with the U.S. foreign policy. Civil rights is important, but it is understood to be part of bigger picture rather than a stand-alone topic. The second feature is a focus on stories of individuals' actions and experiences. Dates, places, and events are necessary. But they serve primarily as the backdrop for narratives of individual uncertainty, folly, courage, and determination. One last feature of Blair's instruction is the passive role learners play. Stories demand a storyteller and an audience and there is no role confusion in George Blair's classroom. As the narrator, Blair crafts the stories and delivers them virtually without interruption. As the audience, students take notes, listen, and remain silent.

As Dewey and Shulman predict, subject matter and learners figure heavily into an account of George Blair's instruction. These influences do not work independently, but rather they interact to reinforce Blair's singular practice.

Weaving civil rights into a larger narrative. George Blair worries about the state of race relations in America and what he perceives of as a growing intolerance in his students and the larger public. His practice of weaving civil rights into a larger historical fabric rather than treating it as separate unit comes from a mix of subject matter and learner concerns.

The "problem [of race relations] seems to be getting worse, not better," Blair said, "it scares the hell out of me." Like many of his generation, he once thought that the situation was improving. He is no longer sure. "The rift seems to be even greater," he said, "I mean, we're really in some serious trouble here. Very, very serious trouble."

George Blair talks about race and civil rights with passion and conviction. As a set of important issues and events, Blair would no sooner ignore civil rights than he would the Declaration of Independence. But, as with the Declaration of Independence, Blair believes civil rights must be presented in a broader historical context. The U.S. civil rights movement was and continues be significant, but it's importance can not be understood apart from a larger narrative of the times. And Blair crafts that narrative around the dilemmas Dwight Eisenhower faced. One dilemma surfaced around the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education, a decision which Eisenhower disagreed with, but, nevertheless, enforced with vigor. The drama of that story becomes a powerful moment is Blair's retelling. It is only one moment, however, for in Blair's master narrative, Eisenhower faces other problematic moments in foreign policy, such as how to handle the Hungarian revolt. The view of subject matter that emerges, then, is one where individuals and events are woven together into a master narrative and dramatic stories.

If weaving civil rights into a larger narrative is a function of George Blair's view of subject matter, so too is it part and parcel of his view of learners. In short, he believes his eleventh graders need to see the "big picture." Blair's students already have had three years of U.S. history: a year-long course in fifth grade and a two-year sequence in seventh and eighth grades. He discounts those experiences, however. "When they (students) come here they don't have the faintest idea," he said, "People have said there's carryover from seventh and eighth grade....[But] whoever says that doesn't have the foggiest idea of what goes on in a classroom....To say there's carryover, that's absolutely asinine." Blair senses his students arrive with a fragmented knowledge of history at best. By weaving individuals and events into a larger narrative, he believes he is helping students understand and remember the material.

Focusing on individuals. Weaving civil rights into a bigger story helps George Blair teach his students to have both "humanity and understanding." Central to that effort are stories of individual actors. Those stories are rooted in Blair's views of subject matter and learners.

History in George Blair's classroom is the story of great individuals. He may recognize the importance of social movements and structures, but these are not prominent in his view of history.

Instead he focuses on individual belief and behavior. Study of the 1950's, then, becomes a study of key figures--Eisenhower, Dulles, Marshall, King--and the events they participated in--Hungarian Revolution, Cold War, Brown v. Board of Education, Montgomery Bus Boycott. Most are the big names of US history textbooks, but not all. The "young lad[y]"[3] who wrote a book about her experiences in integrating Central High School in Little Rock received as much attention as Thurgood Marshall and John Foster Dulles. This is not to imply, however, that Blair emphasizes social history or the "lives of ordinary people in all their richness" (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994, p. 84). The history he teaches is primarily political and economic and it features the those individuals who rise to the top. Nevertheless, Blair's interest in individual experiences and his narrative approach provide space for stories of the lesser known as well as the prominent.

The evidence for the notion that George Blair's narrative teaching reflects the needs of his students is more inferential. However, it seems no huge stretch to connect Blair's concern for nurturing his students' "humanity" with the narrative he constructs. His stories about the "dilemmas" Eisenhower faces, the struggles the "young lad[y]" from Little Rock endures, and the like seem designed to emphasize the "human" dimension of history--to show real people in real situations that have real consequences. This is not unproblematic. Blair is not sure what effect his stories have. "You just put the question in their mind and then walk away from it and let them deal with it," he said, "...I think a lot of them forget it. But at least they've been exposed to those kinds of ideas." Moreover, observers may worry that Blair is not encouraging the development of conceptual and analytic skills in his students. In the end, however, it is difficult to dismiss the potential power of Blair's stories on the sense his students make of history and of their own lives.

Teaching as monologue. One last feature of George Blair's teaching is his use of monologue. Blair holds no truck with "new" teaching methods. In his view, small group work, student presentations, and non-traditional assessments are simply "fads." "Does learning go on?" he asks, "Is the maturity level there for these students to truly understand what they're doing?"

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[3] The "young lad[y]," Melba Beals, was one of the nine African American students who entered Central High School in Little Rock under National Guard protection (Beals, 1994).

Blair's organization of his instruction into narrative monologues supplemented with overhead notes reflects his view of the subject matter and learners.

While George Blair genuinely appears to like his students, he nevertheless holds a dim view of their capabilities. He no longer expects students to glean much from the assigned textbook readings: "I wanted them to pick up the major points that are in the book, that are in the subject....And I don't think they have the historical background to understand what the important points are in the chapter and what is [sic] not important." He dismisses simulations and other experiential activities as "games," doubting that they have any real or lasting effect: "I'd say I don't think the kid can make the generalization from this game to an historical event or, or general ideas of life or flow of society or the flow of history, or the flow of psychology, the flow of people, the flow of culture. He assigns a research paper, but reports, "I don't expect much."

If Blair's monologues develop, in part, because he does not believe students are capable of doing much on their own, another important reason comes from his felt need to prepare them for college studies. "I view the course also as preparation for college," he said, "They have to learn to study well...they've got to get a...physical tolerance for sitting down for three hours and studying and talking notes and that kind of thing."

Blair's practice of outlining the textbook chapter and displaying those notes on an overhead projector also comes from his sense of his students. When he began teaching high school, Blair would assign textbook readings and assume the students had digested them. Test scores and "the feel that you have for the class" suggested otherwise. "I would give an assignment in reading and then I would go through those points," he said, "[and] they didn't have the foggiest idea of what I was talking about.... So I said I'm going have to give them, probably have to give them something else to hold on to." Blair's solution: "I give them my notes in my class, which is literally an outline of the course."

George Blair's view of his students, then, contributes to his practice of constructing narratives and presenting overhead notes. His view of history as a school subject and the need to "cover" it completely also contribute to these practices.

Blair believes he faces a simple reality: He must cover the entire history of the US ("Colonialism to Clinton") in an entirely too short school year. "I gotta get through the material," he said, "We're content-oriented." Given less content and more time, Blair said there are issues, such as civil rights, that "I might deal with differently." The press to cover the material, however, is strong and Blair's decision to streamline his instruction through stories and overhead notes makes some sense.

Using Activities and Experiences to Push Students' Thought and Feelings: The Case of Linda Strait

Linda Strait and George Blair share some commonalties. Both hold undergraduate and graduate degrees in history. Both come to teaching after earlier careers: Blair served a hitch in the US Air Force; Strait was a librarian for eight years. Strait and Blair also share a common commitment to teaching civil rights.

A few minutes in each teacher's classroom, however, drives out any thought that these are similar teachers. Where George Blair is a master storyteller, Linda Strait is a purposeful provocateur. Rather than create and deliver a narrative in which civil rights plays only a part, Strait constructs a separate unit devoted to civil rights and expresses it through a range of lectures, small and whole group activities, readings, and assignments. Rather than focus on individuals' actions, Strait weaves together attention to individual actors and larger social forces. And rather than hold center stage, Strait frequently steps aside to push her students into the active engagement with the ideas and emotions of the issue.

One other difference between these teachers is worth note: George Blair, a 25 year veteran teacher, believes he is already doing his best. Linda Strait, in her sixth year, acknowledges that she is "constantly tinkering" with her instructional planning and practice. "Any methods I come up with," she said, "I'm devising on my own, I'm making up as I go along."

It is the differences between these two teachers, then, that stand out. Yet, like her colleague, Linda Strait's approach to teaching civil rights is rooted in her views of subject matter and learners.

Teaching Civil Rights Through Activities and Experiences

Linda Strait crafts all of her instruction into topical units. Earlier in the year, for example, I observed her unit on immigration and in the previous year I had seen units on Reconstruction and World War II. Strait's units draw direction from various sources: her college notes, the state eleventh grade social studies syllabus, published curriculum materials, and her own reading. The textbook figures into this mix--she reviews it for key ideas and assigns sections for students to read--but it drives neither her planning nor her instruction. Her units are a complex whole with various instructional activities and experiences designed to provide multiple opportunities for students to engage the ideas and emotions of the times.

The civil rights unit was designed to last eight class periods. In summary form, the instruction mapped out this way:

> Day 1: Videotape from the Southern Poverty Law Center entitled, "The Shadow of Hate," which described majority discrimination against several religious (Quakers, Baptists, Jews), racial (Native, African, and Asian Americans), and ethnic groups (Irish-Catholics, Mexican Americans). Following the videotape, Strait solicited written reactions from the class.
>
> Day 2: Small group activity where students discussed and listed their reactions to the videotape on large pieces of chart paper. She displayed each chart on the back wall. At the end of the period, she distributed a feature article on school desegregation from the April 18, 1995 issue of Time magazine.
>
> Day 3: Based on the previous night's reading, Strait gave students an unscored "quiz" which asked them to categorize nine statements as either an instance of civil rights or civil liberties.[4] Strait then reviewed part one of the "notes" she prepares and distributes for each unit.[5]
>
> Day 4: Videotape from the Southern Poverty Law Center, "A Time for Justice," which chronicles the civil rights movement for African Americans. At the end of the video, Strait posed four questions for discussion the next day. The questions were: 1) What were the goals of the movement; 2) What were the strategies of movement participants; 3) Why did the movement succeed; and 4) Given the chance to participate in any of the events of this movement, which events would you participate in and why?
>
> Day 5: "Roundtable" discussion of the four questions posed the previous day. Strait then introduced an activity that would take up the rest of this class and all the next day's. The assignment called for students to imagine that they were living in the early 1950's and that a

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[4] Statements included, "...a nine year old girl is not allowed to play on the school basketball team" and "...you are arrested for burning the U.S. flag." As Strait explained, the first is an example of civil rights in that applies to conditions of race, gender, or age. The second is an example of civil liberties in that it refers to conditions intended by the Bill of Rights.

[5] This set of notes (another set was distributed and discussed on day 7) consisted of the following elements: a) definitions of "civil rights" and "civil liberties"; and, b) a chronology of the civil rights movement with special attention to Harry Truman's "efforts" and the Brown v. the Board of Education decision. Also attached were some additional readings on the Brown decision, equal opportunity, and the Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education decision in 1971 which allowed the use of forced busing to end patterns of discrimination.

local skating rink owner refused to admit minority customers. In small groups, students were to create a strategy for winning access to the rink by listing their reasons, methods, and arguments on a worksheet Strait supplied.

Day 6: Simulation where Strait portrayed the skating rink operator and responded as students, in their groups, made their cases.

Day 7: Review of the part two "notes"[6] and a practice session devoted to writing essays culled from previous eleventh grade Regents tests.[7]

Day 8: Review of the practice essays. Strait then rearranged student desks into a large circle and led the class in a "reading" from a handout entitled "Forty Lives for Freedom," a list she prepared of individuals who had lost their lives to the cause of civil rights. Each student read one person's name and the circumstances of his or her death.[8] Strait then distributed and reviewed a handout entitled, "Hate Crimes (Summer, 1991)," a list of 13 crimes committed between June 4-August 31, 1991.[9] Class ended with a slide/tape show Strait developed several years ago on Martin Luther King, Jr.[10]

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[6] These notes included sections on the early philosophy of the civil rights movement, early leaders and activists, civil rights presidents, later philosophies, more "radical" leaders, assassinations, other civil rights movements (e.g., Women, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Handicapped/Disabled Persons), and Supreme Court cases.

[7] The prompts were these:

Essay #1: During various time periods in U.S. history, groups of people have been excluded from full participation in American society.

Groups
Native American Indians (1790-1890)
Latinos (1900-1970)
Japanese Americans (1900-1970)
Women (1940-1990)
African Americans (1945-1970)

a. Select three of the groups listed. For each one selected, discuss a specific example of how the group was excluded from full participation in American society during the time period indicated.

b. For one of the groups you selected in answer to a, discuss a specific action taken by the Federal Govt. or an organization during or after the time period indicated to help this group achieve full participation in American society.

Essay #2: Since 1865, agents of change have acted to advance the cause of civil rights and civil liberties in the United States.

Agents of Change
Government
A nongovernmental group
An individual

For each of the agents of change listed:

a. Explain one action taken by that agent of change to help advance civil rights or civil liberties in the U.S.

b. Describe the historical circumstances that led to that action.

[8] For example, Rev. George Lee--killed for leading voter registration drive (Belzoni, Mississippi, 1955); Willie Edwards--killed by the Klan (Montgomery, Alabama, 1957); Paul Guihard--European reporter killed during the Ole Miss riot (Oxford, Mississippi, 1962); and Virgil Lamar Ware--youth killed during wave of racist violence (Birmingham, Alabama, 1963).

[9] For example, Albuquerque, New Mexico (June 4, 1991)--A cross was burned on the lawn of a racially mixed family; Woodbridge, New Jersey (June 28, 1991)--Thirteen people were arrested for assaulting and harassing Asian Indians; Fullerton, California (July 7, 1991)--A Chinese American teenager was beaten unconscious by Skinheads.

Strait adapted the "Forty Lives" and "Hate Crimes" lists from materials she received from the Southern Poverty Law Center.

[10] Strait had to be absent from school the next day. She prepared a 12 question, multiple-choice quiz to be administered that day. The questions ranged from definitional (e.g., Which action is the best example of civil

This free-standing unit has several distinct features. First, Linda Strait constructs a distinct unit which spans time, circumstance, and groups. She emphasizes African American experiences, but more, it seems, as a case in point than as the definitive civil rights group. Second, Strait employs a wide variety of activities in something of an instructional tour-de-force. Multiple opportunities--reading, writing, viewing, role-playing--arise for students to engage ideas and emotions. Third, Strait expands the role of "teacher." She plays the traditional roles of knowledge-giver (when she reviews unit notes) and knowledge-evaluator (when she scores the end-of-unit quizzes). Strait plays less traditional roles when she organizes small groups as a means of eliciting reactions to a videotape and when she organizes the skating rink activity. Strait is not an "invisible" teacher who directs class from the sidelines (Wineburg & Wilson, 1991). But, she pushes beyond the traditional parameters of teacher. Finally, Strait promotes an expansive view of the subject matter. She gives attention to the major actors and events of the civil rights movement. She also gives significant attention to lesser known people (the "Forty Lives for Freedom" list) and events (the "Hate Crimes" list). The two videotapes and the skating rink simulation seem particularly suited for bringing the civil rights movement down to a recognizable level. So while Strait covers much of the standard political and economic history curriculum, her unit delves far into the "ordinary lives" that represent social history.

Reformers would likely applaud Linda Strait's unit. And they should, for students were generally actively engaged and there were instances of truly powerful teaching. Consider two examples. The first is the skating rink simulation; the second is the roundtable discussion.

The skating rink simulation. During the class period before the simulation, Linda Strait assigned students to five groups. She gave them 10 minutes to brainstorm reasons, methods, and arguments to persuade a white skating rink operator during the 1950's to rethink her policy of prohibiting entry to minority customers. While students got down to the task, Strait circulated,

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disobedience?) to generalization (Which is the most valid conclusion to be drawn from the study of the civil rights movement in the U.S. since 1954?) to interpretive (e.g., students were presented with the quotation, "We will match your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering....We will not hate you, but we cannot obey your unjust laws," and asked who was the most likely author--Booker T. Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr., W.E.B. DuBois, or Malcolm X)

alternately listening to and commenting on their deliberations. Just before the bell, she informed students that they would have six minutes to "convince" her during the simulation the next day.

Students arrived the next day to see one chair in the middle classroom and the remaining desks arranged around the room in five groups. After taking roll, Linda Strait walked over to and sat in the single chair. She announced it was time to start. A pattern developed where each group, in turn, walked over to Strait (who played the white skating rink operator role with passion and spirit), made their pitches, responded to Strait's questions and barbs, and then sat down. After the last group, Strait commented on the various efforts. What follows are the interactions as two groups presented their arguments and Strait's closing comments:

> The first group (Jerry, Sue, Linda, Rachel, and Terry--all white students) approached Strait. They did so sheepishly and hesitantly. Strait immediately launched into her character. "How did you folks get in here?" she demanded.
>
> Sue--"We want to skate."
> Strait--"Sorry, whites only."
> Jerry--"What's the difference?"
> Strait--"That's the policy, that's always been the policy...in this town."
> Jerry--"...that isn't fair..."
> Linda--"You're going to lose customers."
> Strait--...."no problem so far...you (pointing to Jerry; presuming he is white and the others are minorities) can skate, but they have to go."
> Jerry--"We have no choice but to protest."
> Rachel--"And we'll encourage our friends not to come."
> Strait-..."I'm not too concerned...As you can see, it's busy tonight..."
>
> Jerry asks if the group can re-group and come back. Strait, still in character, asks him what he's talking about. He tries to explain that he's talking to Strait, the teacher.
>
> Strait--"I own a skating rink. I don't know any teacher. (to Jerry) He can skate, but the rest of you got to get out of here."
> Rachel--"If you don't let us skate, we're going to block the door."
> Strait--"Well, that's fine. I'll just have you arrested....I suggest you leave or I'm going to call to get you removed from the premises.
>
> As Jerry's group leaves, Ned, a member of the audience, said aloud, "Man, this is impossible!" Back in their seats, the group huddles and returns for a second try. Terry said, "We have to emphasize that this is a racist facility." Strait shrugged and said, "It's no different from any other in this town."

* * * * *

The other groups followed. Many echoed arguments for fairness and the loss of business and issued threats of ensuing protests and blocking the facility. Some added arguments about a special

time for minority skaters and breaking with tradition. The last group used some of these appeals and one new one:

> The final group (two white boys--Ben and Steve; two white girls--Melanie and Anna; and one Chinese girl--Kim) approached Strait. She ignored them. Finally, Melanie said, "Excuse me." Strait looked up.
>
> Ben--"We'd like to skate in your rink."
> Strait--"You can skate, but the rest of you have to get out of here."
> Ben--"What you're doing is unconstitutional."
> Strait--"I know my constitution."
> Steve--"If you're going to segregate..."
> Strait--"Look, I'm not a lawyer, I'm a businesswoman....But there's no law in this town that says I can't just have whites."
> Steve--"But if you kick us out, where can we go?"
> Strait--"...not my problem. Find another place."
> Anna--"It's our right to skate....Think of all the money you're losing."
> Strait--"Well, it's about closing time...[this is a] teen curfew violation (Ned called out: "There was no teen curfew in the rules!")...I need to be getting home....There's no law that says I have to let you in."
> Kim--"Where are we supposed to go?"
> Strait--"Go somewhere else."
> Melanie--"If the movie theater let us in, would you let us in?"
> Strait--"That's an interesting question."
> Ben--"...are you thinking about it?"
> Strait--..."but...[if I did that, then others would be] ready to lynch me out of town"
> Steve--..."the minorities would stand up for you."
> Kim--..."think about it, you're a female....How do you know that others wouldn't follow you?"

With that, Strait announced "Time's up." Jerry called out, "That's the closest (to being convincing). In the last few minutes, Strait thanked the students for their efforts and talked through some of the arguments made. "I do believe that two of you convinced me," she said, "...but I continued saying no....Two of you convinced me to think about changing my ways." The class exploded as students called for Strait to reveal which groups had succeeded. After a pause, Strait extracted a promise that they would not tell succeeding classes and then announced her decisions:

> The last group....Being a woman hit my feminist side even though there wasn't a strong woman's movement in the 50's....The woman's movement picks up in the 60's....But it appealed to me even though there wasn't a feminist movement. I hadn't expected that. And Mary's group convinced me...(Mary had announced that she had skated before and that, unbeknownst to the operator, was of mixed race background). [Her background] was an interesting twist. It threw me off. The others were just making me mad...I didn't like the personal attacks...but you continued pressing (and that was good).

Jerry said, "We came back." "Yeah," said Strait, "But telling me I was losing business...wouldn't convince me...." Strait then added a final comment on playing her role. "I didn't like the feeling of being a racist," she said, "...I was out of my element...But I realized I was doing pretty good (at rebutting the students' arguments) and that didn't make me feel very good either!" Several students nodded in response.

This vignette illustrates several dimensions of Linda Strait's approach to teaching. First, it demonstrates Strait's impulse to go beyond traditional instructional methods. Students learned about arguments against segregation and methods of fighting it through the videotapes, their textbook readings, and the unit notes. Here, however, not only did they have to apply what they learned, but they had to do so in very different context. Second, Strait wants to provide opportunities for her students to feel the emotion of an era as well as learn facts and concepts. She knows that, while many of her students might sympathize with the experiences of African Americans during this period, few truly understand those experiences. She wants students to have an intellectual grasp of the era, but she wants them to have an emotional grasp as well. Third, Strait knows that there is power in students working together on challenging problems. There are no right answers to this exercise and Strait understands that students will struggle even more than they did if they participated in the activity as individuals. Finally, Strait illustrates her willingness to step outside the traditional teacher role. She is still at the center of the class. Yet, in assuming the skating rink operator role, she takes on a different persona (even to the extent that she ignores Jerry's effort to talk to her as a teacher). Strait can and does deliver instruction through traditional means. But she also constructs activities where she can expand her role.

The roundtable discussion. The skating rink simulation was a powerful thing to witness. Students were engaged from the moment the activity started and their small victories and many defeats at the hands of Linda Strait's skilled acting registered on their faces and in their public and private comments. Other activities during the unit were also powerful, but were more slow to develop. The roundtable discussion is a good example of an activity that, despite an uncertain start, developed into a richly complex experience.

The roundtable discussion was built on four questions Linda Strait posed the day before. The questions were: 1) What were the goals of the movement; 2) What were the strategies of movement participants; 3) Why did the movement succeed; and 4) Given the chance to participate in any of the events of this movement, which events would you participate in and why? On the day of the discussion, students took seats in a large circle that Strait arranged ahead of time. In her

brief introduction, Strait explained that the discussion would be a "graded assignment," which meant she kept track of which students spoke and how often. Then she asked the first question.

The discussion began slowly. A few students volunteered brief responses; most looked around nervously anticipating who would speak next. Some of the awkwardness disappeared when a boy called out, "I agree!" after another student's response. Strait and the students laughed, especially when he added, "Does that count (as a gradable response)?" Strait assured him that it did not, but the number and length of student responses picked up some afterward.

The second question (i.e., strategies of the movement) generated more and more expansive talk than the first, but the third (why the movement succeeded) seemed to fall flat. There were a couple provocative claims about the role white interest played in the movement for black rights. For the most part, however, the discussion flagged.

Seeming to sense this, Strait pushed on to the fourth question (if and how students might have participated). The discussion fairly exploded from there. Most students sat forward in their seats, several who had been silent offered their views, and the length and quality of the responses seemed to grow. The discussion looked like this:

Strait--"Okay, number four is, 'Given the chance to participate in any of the events of this movement, which events would you participate in and why?'"
Jerry--"The problem is one, after you get your butt kicked, you'd quit...you wouldn't know the first time (you protested), but if you found out you could be killed, I don't think many people would go again."
Tom--"I would have gone on marches going to see the Governor...that was an important one."
Sarah--"I would have participated in the march to the Governor also...go to the source."
Anna--"After seeing all that stuff, I started to feel bad. But I would be afraid others would think it was wrong (to participate in marches)."
James--"I would want to participate too. The trouble is I don't think others would agree and you could get killed."
Jerry--"Should we assume we are white or black?"
Strait--"As whites. Whites were also active throughout. The NAACP had both black and white members.."
Melanie--"If I was living then, I would feel like I had to do something. I've done protests before."
Strait--"Do you think if you were black it would make a difference?"
Melanie--"If I was black, then I'd be involved from the beginning. If I was white, I would have had to learn and then I would have participated."
Jerry--"If I was black, then the whole struggle is a black thing really so I'd be more anxious to get involved. (pause) I guess it was also a white problem, but it was more of a black problem...It was easier for whites to stay out...as a black, I would feel more pressure to get involved."

Katrina--"I would participate in the bussing (boycott). I don't see why they had to sit in the back of the bus. Everybody's the same."
Lori--"White or black, I would have participated if I wanted, if I believed it was wrong, I would have participated. (some snickers). I would have!"
Strait--"The bus boycott lasted over a year. What if you needed the bus for work?"
Linda--"During the boycott, it was giving whites what they wanted. They didn't want black people there so the boycott was not the best (strategy)."
Sue--"I agree, but it lasted so long that it worked." (cacophony of student voices expressing themselves to one another and Strait)
Strait--(quieting the class) "Interesting....I put this question to myself, would I have participated? I don't think so if I was in elementary school, but if I had been older, I would have participated...idealistically yes, but realistically...I still think I would have done so. I participated in protests over the Vietnam war--I wore a black armband and went to campus demonstrations...and we took over the administration building...But it was a kind college. They didn't call the police, they just wanted us out....(lots of student chatter at this revelation)....But it's hard to think about giving up your life for that....[11]

In this vignette, we see the power of a good question. For whatever reason, Strait's first three questions failed to engage the students' active interest and attention. Those who responded did so in desultory and cursory fashion. Most, however, just sat quietly. The fourth question, by contrast, struck harder. Something much closer to a real discussion or conversation (Wilen & White, 1991) develops: More students respond, their responses seem more thoughtful, and students seem to be listening and talking to one another. Make no mistake; this is brief moment--something less than 10 minutes--yet in that short time, Linda Strait has provided an opportunity for students to think hard and to express their nascent ideas about a issue of some importance to them.

Not all of Strait's activities were successful. Students' interest and involvement ebbed and flowed and sometimes, most often at the end of class, it faded into idleness and social chat. Those times stand out in large part, however, because they contrasted with the more frequent instances where students were actively engaged.

Understanding Linda Strait's Instructional Practice: Subject Matter and Learners

Three features define Linda Strait's teaching. One is that she constructs a separate unit on the civil rights movement rather than teach it in historical and/or a textbook context. Doing so, in effect, allows her to recontextualize civil rights for African Americans by including other groups

[11] George Blair often uses personal stories to illustrate points he wants to make. So does Linda Strait. Throughout the civil rights unit, Strait added glimpses into her past. For example, as part of her wrap-up of the simulation, she told a story about a bus strike that hindered her getting to a summer school class. She explained that she had to walk four miles and that she got in a "bad situation" the one time she accepted a ride from an older man.

which experienced discrimination. A second feature of Strait's practice is a broad range of activities and assessments. These lessons offer opportunities to understand the era both intellectually and emotionally. Finally, Strait is trying to negotiate a different role for herself. She is seldom off-stage for long, but Strait creates opportunities where she can expand the role of teacher. Understanding how Linda Strait constructs this practice is made easier when one considers her views of subject matter and learners.

Constructing a distinct unit. Linda Strait shares her colleague's concern that the mostly white Westwood students think hard about the civil rights movement historically and about race relations today. Toward that end, she creates a distinct unit that, while featuring the struggle of African Americans, also gives attention to other minority groups. Underlying her decision are her views of the subject matter and learners.

W. E. B. DuBois (1903/1989 nominated the "problem of the color line " as the most enduring of American problems. Linda Strait agrees. Her first goal is to help students understand that "this (racism) is really still happening today." "I think it's pushed in the back of the memory of people that they don't seem to see that this is still a really awful problem," she said, "I see it and I have always seen it as the biggest problem in America today...how the races get along."

Strait contends that students today are more tolerant than those she had even five years ago. That toleration, however, seems limited to religious differences. Racial differences, she asserts, are another matter. "It seems like, on the surface, superficially, that they might be more tolerant in terms of religion," she said, "...you [get] more heated, close-minded debates about the race issue as opposed to the religion issue."

Linda Strait's second goal is broader and underscores the changing view that history is more than politics and economics and more than a record of the victorious:

> What I try to convey is that America is multifaceted. That there-- it's not *just* white America anymore. I don't know if it ever was *just* that, but that's how it was always taught in the history books. So, I'm trying to let them see that there's another side, and it's ever

> increasing, that other side of the diversity in America, and we have got to see it, recognize it, and start working together.

The implications of this goal for students are direct. "I'm not necessarily trying to tell everyone that you gotta love everybody," Strait said, "but you have to accept them and you can't, you shouldn't just hate them because of the differences."

In addition to these goals, Linda Strait created a distinct and expansive civil rights unit because she has faced what she perceives as ugly reactions from students when she raises racial issues alone. Strait said, "So often, it seems they feel that when you bring up civil rights, anything about racial issues, that you're attacking them because they are white. So I wanted to approach it from a different [angle]." One of those angles is to make it clear that she does not "blame" her white students for the sins of their forefathers and mothers. "I wanted to bring out the point that I didn't hold them responsible for what happened," she said, "It's the fault of our forefathers. I do hold them responsible for today if they allow things like that to continue." The other angle is that civil rights are more than an issue for African Americans only:

> Because I wanted everything that I taught to touch on...all of the different people that are in the United States today, I try to be inclusive of all groups, and to bring out...all the other groups....That's why I like those--the civil rights films--because it is all of the groups. Not just the black--the Japanese, Latinos, everything.

Given her broad purposes, it is no surprise that Linda Strait would construct her own distinct civil rights unit. That decision makes only more sense when one realizes that Strait's purposes exceed the borders of any one textbook chapter.

Developing a broad range of activities and assessments. Constructing a distinct unit is one way Linda Strait tries to elevate the importance of civil rights. Another is through developing a broad range of activities and assessments designed to give students multiple opportunities to think about and express their ideas. The nature and range of those experiences seems related to Strait's views of the subject matter and learners.

Linda Strait knows that civil rights is a thorny subject, and that her mostly white students feel uncertain and uncomfortable talking about it. She also knows that many teachers simply shy away from the issues. She will not. But she recognizes that students will need a variety of experiences--both cognitive and affective--to get hold of the big ideas. "I wanted knowledge about what happened," she said, "and I wanted feelings....I wanted to appeal to them on an emotional level. And in the process, to learn about other history. Not just white man's history."

To address her interest in students' "knowledge," Strait developed a range of activities. She used videotapes, textbook and other readings, and unit notes to convey the facts and themes central to understanding the civil rights movement. She assessed students' cognitive understanding through the reactions students listed after seeing the first videotape, the strategies worksheet they completed for the skating rink simulation, the ideas they contributed to the roundtable discussion, the ideas they expressed in their practice essays, and their answers to the quiz she developed.

One reason Linda Strait constructs a range of activities and assessments is because she believes all students can learn. She knows, however, that not all students learn the same way and that different learning experiences will engage different students. "I am of the belief that all students can learn," she said, "just in different ways, and different styles."

The other reason Strait varies her instructional approaches is to explore students' affective responses. So while all her activities had an academic element, Strait expanded most to promote her affective purposes. For example, students' written reactions to the first videotape took on additional meaning when Strait asked students to share and talk about their reactions with classmates. Similarly, the strategies students brainstormed in the skating rink exercise became a means of involving them to a first-hand experience with discrimination in the simulation activity. Linda Strait knows that much rides on her students' performance on the Regents test. She wants them to do well and, to that end, she pushes her students academically. At the same time, Strait wants students to feel something of what discrimination is like. "I would like students to be more empathetic with other people," she said, "Try and just imagine if you were in their shoes. Even if they can never be your best friend, you know, try and understand others."

The range of instructional activity evident in Linda Strait's civil rights unit owes much to her sense that students need to master a considerable amount of subject matter knowledge and to experience something of the passion of the times. Knowledge is important, she asserts, but without empathy, it is hollow.

Redefining the teacher's role. The third feature of Linda Strait's instructional practice is her reconstruction of the role of teacher. Strait can play the traditional role of knowledge-giver and knowledge-evaluator. But she strives to take herself off center stage and push more of the responsibility for learning on her students. Figuring into both of these efforts, are Strait's views of subject matter and learners.

"I try to throw in as many activities and projects," she said, "but I still feel that I am too heavily the center of it." From her reading of documents like the New York State New Compact for Learning (New York State Department of Education, 1991), Linda Strait has come to believe that her teaching should be less "teacher-centered." It is not always clear what she means by this. Moreover, she expresses a concern that, as she moves away from the role of knowledge-giver, her students will not learn all that they need to in order to pass the Regents test.[12] "Knowing what the exams are like," she said, "I see so much content there, so I don't know how to get them to learn that content with out me being the center and everything for them." Nevertheless, Strait explores both a range of instructional activities in her units and her role in enacting them.

In expanding the role of teacher, Linda Strait is also redefining the role of "student." Put simply, the kinds of activities Strait constructs push students to be more actively engaged and more responsible for their own learning. The open-ended nature of activities like the roundtable discussion and the skating rink simulation lead to no particular "right" answer. Instead, students must actively interpret the meaning of these experiences both academically and affectively. To be sure, some students occasionally failed to do the assigned readings, sat out class discussions, and goofed off during the small group sessions. Too, one could argue that Strait's preparation and coverage of unit notes spoon-fed rather than pushed students. Considered in the context of the

[12] Of Linda Strait's approximately 100 students (four classes), 16 failed the Regents examination.

entire unit, however, these elements were far more the exception than the rule. Students could refuse to participate and they could duck their responsibility to understand the import of classroom activities. But in contrast with more traditional classroom settings (Shermis & Barth, 1982), Strait pressed her students to expand their sense of themselves as learners.

Two Teachers; Two Pedagogical Approaches: Other Explanations

As noted earlier, one purpose of this study is to understand the instructional approaches George Blair and Linda Strait take. I have argued that each "psychologizes" his or her instruction based largely on an idiosyncratic view of the subject matter and learners. The case seems pretty strong on that score. One wonders though about the influence of the social context in which these teachers work and/or the biographies of each teacher. In an earlier piece (Grant, 1996), I argued that teachers' instructional decisions can be understood through the interaction of policy, organizational (or social), and personal factors. I think that argument still holds. The cases of George Blair and Linda Strait nicely complicate that explanation, however.

The instructional differences between Strait and Blair are startling, in part, because they teach in same school context. Previous studies (Anyon, 1980; Evans, 1990; Wineburg & Wilson, 1991; Yeager & Davis, 1996) have also illustrated variation in teachers' practices, but one explanation for those differences, it could be argued, was that the teachers taught in very different school settings. Fewer studies have looked at the practices of teachers working in the same school environment (Grant, forthcoming; Thornton, 1988). These studies undercut simplistic views of the explanatory power of school context for the teachers studied demonstrate no less instructional variation than that encountered across different instructional settings. And so the differences between George Blair and Linda Strait, while surprising given the similarities in the school setting, are not unique. It would be silly to think that school context matters not. How it matters and in what particular ways, however, is less clear.

The other set of factors that might help explain the differences between George Blair and Linda Strait are individual. Teachers generally have a good deal of instructional autonomy and so it makes sense that their personal knowledge, beliefs, and experiences influence their teaching

decisions. Interestingly enough, Blair and Strait share several personal traits. Each grew up in working class environs with parents who pushed education. Each holds two degrees in history and presumably knows well the subject matter of U.S. history. And each came to teaching after a significant non-school work experience, George Blair as an Air Force enlisted man and Linda Strait as a librarian. In terms of personal factors, then, the clearest distinctions between these teachers are race and gender. As a white male, it would surprise few observers to see George Blair treat the civil rights movement in a seemingly cursory manner. Similarly, those same observers would be hardly surprised that Linda Strait, an African American woman, might give more and more sustained attention to a movement so critical to her life. Race and gender may well figure deeply into each teacher's instructional decisions. Yet, if so, these factors figure just as deeply in all the instructional decisions these teachers make. For there is little to distinguish each teacher's civil rights unit from any others they teach. George Blair develops a narrative framework based on textbook chapters for all his units. The Reconstruction unit I observed earlier in the school year had the same characteristics that emerged in his Eisenhower unit--weaving issues into a bigger story, focusing on individuals, and teaching as a monologue. Similarly, Linda Strait's civil rights unit exemplified the approach she took in an earlier immigration unit. There she again constructed a distinct unit, developed a broad range of activities and experiences, and pushed herself and her students into new roles. The point is not that race and class do not matter in the way Blair and Strait constructed their civil rights units, but that instead, like the influence of social context, they matter in no obvious way.

Considering context and individual factors in the cases of George Blair and Linda Strait, then, seems to support rather than undercut the power of views of subject matter and learners as explanations for these teachers' instructional practices and the differences between them. The problem, of course, is that nothing about teaching and learning, subject matter and schools is simple. Dewey and Shulman provide a valuable framework for thinking about teachers and teaching. But the devil, as always, is in the details. These cases do support the notion of subject-specific pedagogy, that teachers' content and pedagogical decisions are rooted in their views of the

subject matter and learners. Yet, these cases also illustrate some interesting and potentially useful pedagogical tensions.

Tensions Around Subject Matter and Learners

The differences between Linda Strait and George Blair's approaches to teaching civil rights are instructive in several ways. One is that teaching is not a simple additive process: Teachers' practices are much more complex than a concoction of one part subject matter to one part learners. A second way these cases are instructive is that they illustrate a range of tensions in and around the interaction among learners and subject matter and the construction of instructional representations. Recent reforms (National Center for History in the Schools, 1994; National Council for the Social Studies, 1994) call for ambitious teaching that emphasizes rich and challenging content, multiple opportunities for kids to engage ideas, and varied instructional approaches. These are good and noble goals. In classrooms, however, these goals frequently prove problematic. The different instructional representations of Blair and Strait employ, then, illustrate tensions around learners and subject matter that are only hinted at in the subject-specific literature. Moreover, these tensions are virtually ignored in the reform literature and in most professional development.

The Tension Around Learners and Learning: Teachers' Goals and Expectations of Students

One set of tensions surfaces around learners and learning. In George Blair's case, a problem arises between the high hopes Blair has for his students and his low expectations of their abilities. In Linda Strait's case, we see the problems that can develop when students resist the subject matter at hand. In each case, the problems these teachers face represent a similar tension between teachers' goals and the expectations they hold of students.

High Hopes and Frail Learners

Like most teachers, George Blair has high hopes for his students. He hopes that they will learn how to read and write, endure college lectures, become good human beings, and do well on the Regents test. Blair's subject matter knowledge is more than adequate to help students achieve these goals. His view of his students as learners, however, is more problematic. Put simply, Blair does not believe his students are capable of doing much. As a result, while his instruction

may help students sit quietly in college lecture halls and prepare for the state test, his instruction seems ill-suited to help students realize his other goals. Listen to how Blair talks about his hopes:

> And I tell them...you know, your professors will talk differently. They may have a parallel lecture to the book, but you gotta read the book. You gotta read the book separately, it'll be separate from the lectures, and you gotta get involved in all that. So they have to learn how to read a book and pick up salient information. And I hope they're learning that kind of stuff....
>
> You just put the question in their mind and then walk away from it and let them deal with it. Let them hopefully deal with it instead of just forgetting it, but I think a lot of them forget it. But at least they've been exposed to those kinds of ideas.

These quotes might have come from any teacher. Considered against the description of his civil rights unit, however, they suggest a tension around Blair's view of his learners. One aspect of that tension is that he does not believe his students are capable of learning on their own. In the first quote, Blair says students need to learn to "read a book and pick up salient information." This seems curious since he does not believe they can do this in his class. Recall that he doubts whether students have either the historical background to cull the "important points" from the textbook or the ability to make "generalizations" based on what they read. The second quote reminds us that Blair believes students' minds are like sieves--no matter what one puts in, most of it drains out. His students come to class with a two-year course in U.S. history during seventh and eighth grade. Blair discounts the "carryover" of that experience, believing that students still have only the "foggiest" idea about history.

The tension around learners plays out in George Blair's instruction. Blair's principal instructional approaches--storytelling and note-giving--are rooted in his sense that his students can not read and think on their own. Recall that he provides chapter notes because they can not synthesize the important details from the textbook and that he constructs unit narratives because they can not see "the big picture." The assumptions behind both these actions may be right. But while these approaches may help students in the short run (especially for the Regents exam), it is not clear that they will do much to help students realize the bigger hopes Blair (and presumably

most others) has for them. In the case of the textbook notes, students may understand that textbooks present an array of ideas and that one can extract them in an organized fashion. But Blair's students do not learn to do this themselves. "I want them to pick up the major points that are in the book," he said, "[but] I don't think they have the historical background to understand what the important points are in the chapter and what is not important, so the notes I hope point out what I think the important points are in the chapter." It would be one thing if he demonstrated how one outlines a chapter, yet this is not what happens. George Blair wants his students to be able to "pick up the major points." The only person who practices this, however, is Blair.

The problem of who learns what is also problematic in Blair's storytelling style. Though creating a narrative is only one way of "doing" history (Hexter, 1971), it is an important one. Being able to weave the facts of an event such as the civil rights movement into a coherent narrative is a powerful indication of knowing and understanding. George Blair can do this, but can his students? The answer is unclear, in part, because they seem to have so few opportunities to do so. Students may some practice on essay questions and in the research papers they write. The bulk of the class time, however, features Blair creating and delivering the narrative. Students probably record some pieces of this narrative, but they do not construct their own. Given Blair's hopes that students will be able to do what he does--i.e., to synthesize information from a text and to deal with big questions--it is curious that they have so few opportunities to do these things.

George Blair appears to have the subject matter knowledge to help his students develop a deep understanding of history. His note-giving and story-telling instructional approaches, however, suggest he holds a thin view of his students as learners. As he constructs his pedagogy, then, Blair mixes a rich sense of people, actions, and events with the notion that his students will not understand these things unless they are spoon-fed.

Student Resistance to Racial Issues

In some sense, the case of Linda Strait illustrates a different tension involving learners and learning. Strait believes her students need to deal with tough issues like race. But how to deal with this thorny issue? Strait would like to take it on head-first. Doing so in the past, however,

has left students angry and upset. Her compromise is to blend the experiences of African Americans with those of other minority groups. In her view, this "softens the approach to [racism]." Many teachers will not see this as a problem. Strait does. "I want to go right at it full force," she said, "It's not my nature to just ease into it like that. And so, it's restraining on me." In the end, then, the tension around learners and learning in Linda Strait's classroom is not unlike that which George Blair faces: Both teachers find their goals differ from their sense of what students are capable of thinking and doing.

Linda Strait's anxiety about how students react to issues of race stems from last year's class. Then, she used a series of activities she picked up from a prejudice reduction workshop. The results, she reports, were disastrous:

> The students were resistant to hearing about it (racism)....They said that I was creating the problem by bringing it up, and we don't need to be doing stuff like this. [They said] I make it worse when I'd bring out the stuff, and make people hateful of each other, and they said, "You're causing the problem."

Strait said she felt "so bad" that she put the activities away. And yet, while this experience chilled her, she was not dissuaded. Acknowledging that dealing with race head-on "seems to offend too many people" and encourages them to become "resistant," Strait decided to take a "different approach" in her U.S. history class this year.

The basis for that "different approach" was to widen the focus. Strait deals with racial issues in other units throughout the school year (e.g., Reconstruction). Her principal vehicle, however, is the civil rights unit. She would like to focus exclusively on the experiences of African Americans, but her sensitivity to students' resistance persuades her to broaden the topic to include other minority groups. The result: A unit that explores the African American push for equal rights in the context of similar efforts by other non-majority groups.

Strait is "pleased" with the way the unit played out: She dealt with many of the issues she wanted to and her students seemed to embrace rather than resist her efforts. She concludes, "I guess there has to be a balance." Nevertheless, she rankles at having to make this compromise. "I

didn't want to do it from the attack point of view," she said, "...[But] it's like you have to put on kid gloves and be real nice and sweet about it when I want to be real open and honest about it."

Managing the Tension around Learners and Learning

Though different in circumstance, the tensions around learners and learning that surface in George Blair and Linda Strait's civil rights units share one commonalty: A difference between a teacher's goals and his or her expectations of student capability. Readers may judge Strait's resolution more successful than Blair's. Her students may not get the full benefit of Strait's "open and honest" discussion of racial issues, but they do benefit both from those discussions that do occur and from the expanded focus on other non-majority groups. Blair's resolution, by contrast, seems more limited. Perceiving his students as incapable of much analytic or synthetic thinking, he proceeds to give them both the details and a framing narrative for each textbook unit. Blair reports that his students successfully apply this information in testing situations. One wonders, however, to what extent they become independent thinkers and knowers.

The tension around learners and learning is instructive on another level. For the differences between Strait's and Blair's views suggests that teachers who take their students seriously may pay a price in terms of student behavior. George Blair expects little from his students and they comply; I have yet to witness a single act of student misbehavior or active resistance. By contrast, when Linda Strait pushed last year's students to confront racial issues, they vigorously opposed her. She may have resolved this tension in her new, "balanced" civil rights unit, but her unease with this compromise suggests that the tension remains.

The Tension Around Subject Matter: Content, Time, and Tests

A second kind of tension surfaces around subject matter. Unlike many of their peers, one problem Linda Strait and George Blair do not face is lack of subject matter knowledge. Both teachers have strong backgrounds in U.S. history. But knowledge of the subject, while necessary, is not sufficient (VanSledright, 1996; Yeager & Davis, 1996). As Wilson (1990) notes, "the commitment to creating a subject matter-rich classroom environment leads to an explosion of curricular possibilities" (p. 12). Like Wilson, Blair and Strait find that their deep

knowledge of history exacerbates rather than resolves the tension around what to teach. Complicating that question even further are the twin issues of time and tests. Like good teachers everywhere, Blair and Strait face the same difficult choices given too much content, insufficient time, and pressure of a high stakes test. The different ways they respond to the tension around content, time, and tests, however, are instructive.

Content, Time, and Tests: George Blair

George Blair manages the tension around content, time, and tests by following the textbook and "covering" the material. He bases that decision on two concerns. One is that he not "miss" any important event or era. The other is that his students are well-prepared for the Regents examination. He could always use more time and he worries about his students' performance on the state test. But he has honed the subject matter of U.S. history and his presentation of it to such a degree that, given more time and/or the absence of the state test, there is little he would change.

Though he never said so explicitly, George Blair's view of history as a school subject seems to emphasize the importance of narrative. The "facts"--people, places, events--are important as evidenced by the display of his textbook notes and his tests which are largely objective questions around historical details. Many teachers are content to stay at this level (Goodlad, 1984). Blair is not. Instead, he crafts a framing narrative for each unit and a series of stories which support and extend that narrative. In this study, Blair frames the unit around the dilemmas Dwight Eisenhower faced as president. He then used stories about the Brown decision and Central High School in Little Rock and stories about John Foster Dulles and the Hungarian Revolution to illustrate, respectively, the domestic and foreign dilemmas Eisenhower encountered. He might have limited his instruction to rehearsing the facts, but Blair chose to frame his unit in a more coherent fashion.

That said, George Blair still faces two dilemmas. One is the problem of managing his narratives and stories such that he can cover the "whole" course. The second problem is how to prepare students such that they will do well on the Regents test. Organizing his instruction around narratives and stories helps him manage these tensions by bringing some order and coherence to an unwieldy subject. Two other actions contribute as well. One is the use of the textbook. Blair's

textbook serves an instructional purpose, primarily as the source of his chapter notes. It also serves an organizational purpose in that it helps him plot an instructional plan across the school year. By following the textbook chapter sequence, Blair feels he will be less like to "miss" something of importance in his march from "Colonialism to Clinton." The other action Blair takes is to monitor the content of Regents test questions and to limit his presentation of topics that are not routinely covered on the exam. "When you do the grading [of the students' exams]," he said, "you know generally what [the tests] hit and what they don't hit." Blair does not necessarily ignore material that is not on the test, but he acknowledges giving it limited attention:

> [For example] I never deal with militarism in the Civil War. Never, because it's never on the Regents, so I don't deal with it....I spent about 25 minutes at the end class, of one class, on a couple of battles, the western battles, the eastern battles, the naval blockade....It's all done in 25 minutes total. It's finished and it's because it's not on the Regents.

Having taught U.S. History for several years now, George Blair has constructed a manageable course. He would not mind having more time, but he believes he can teach the course in a worthy fashion within the regular school year. He is concerned about how his students will perform on the state test, but he is not adverse to the test, in part because he believes it helps promote "high standards" for the students, himself, and his colleagues. So while he admits to being nervous when scoring the exams, he also feels that he has done all that he can to prepare his students to do well. Thus, while George Blair's actions have not eliminated the tension around content, time, and tests, they do suggest that he manages that tension relatively smoothly.

Content, Time, and Tests: Linda Strait

Linda Strait is less sanguine about her efforts to manage the tension around content, time, and tests. She shares Blair's concerns about covering the necessary material in the allotted time and preparing her students well for the Regents test. Unlike her colleague, however, she manages these problems in a radically different way. She believes that creating distinct units independent of the textbook is the right approach. Even so she remains dissatisfied and regularly "tinkers" with her units and the instructional components.

Strait's view of history as a subject matter is complex. Historical fact is an important piece of her view. She emphasizes people, action, and events in the unit notes she provides and in the traditional assessments she uses. More important, however, are the social history goals of understanding the ideas and experiences of historical actors, both individuals and groups and famous and ordinary. So while Strait wants her students to know the facts of the U.S. civil rights movement, she also wants them to look inside the lives of those who lived through the period.

It's an ambitious goal for it means Strait and her students must pursue multiple avenues--readings, discussions, simulations, and the like. It's also a time-consuming effort. Strait could streamline her unit by eliminating some of the more experiential activities. Doing so, however, would undercut her purpose of engaging students on both intellectual and emotional levels. And that takes time. "I'd like to take it on a slower pace," she said. But no sooner had she said this than she went on to talk about the "other activities" she had planned to do, but could not fit in:

> I had some other activities that I wanted to complete the picture of discrimination....I wanted to include materials that I had on women and discrimination. I wanted to show how the civil rights movement affected other movements that followed that. I mean I gave them some brief notes on other movements. The Native American movement, the Latino movement, etcetera, and...I would have preferred to do it all and do a more thorough job on the other groups. But the time ran out.

Strait also ran out of time even to complete the activities she started. She planned to tie the Time article on school segregation to the Brown decision to raise the question of "[whether] we're going a step backwards in terms of integration." A nice connection, it nevertheless was lost in the swirl of a unit too ambitious for the time allowed.

If time is a continuing frustration, so too are the Regents tests. Linda Strait is not naive; like her colleague she studies past exams to see patterns in the text questions. And she explicitly preps students for the exams through exercises such as practice essay-writing. That said, Strait still chafes at the constraint she feels the state test imposes. That constraint comes in two forms. One is the sheer breadth of content covered. "For the Regents exam, knowing what the exams are like,

I see so much content there," she said, "The curriculum [of the test] is just too broad. There's just too much there." The other form of constraint comes from the curricular choices Strait must make to accommodate both her sense of what is important and the test maker's. She explained, "Sometimes I spend a lot of time with something I think that's interesting, I think that's important....I just think it's part of what they need to know as viable human being in this society." Strait paused, and then added, "But the Regents doesn't test anything on it." Sometimes that does not matter; she simply goes ahead with what she thinks is appropriate. Other times she defers to the test. "It's sometimes difficult," she said, "because there's a lot of things I want to do and [given the test] I just skip over [them]." And still other times, she is able to accommodate both impulses--her's and the test's. The skating rink simulation is a good example. This activity balances the important ideas and experiences which help students empathize with historical actor with a potential state test question (in this case, portions of the practice essays which asked students to talk about "actions" groups might have taken to protest discrimination). As her teaching experience grows, Strait is increasingly able to create these "balances." She begrudges the planning time this takes, but Strait knows that in this upscale suburban environment, test scores matter and so she continually walks a line between her goals and the test-makers'.

It may be due to her relative inexperience, her instructional ambitions, or both, but Linda Strait is rarely satisfied with her efforts. She modifies most every unit each year, retooling some completely. "I never feel that I do it right, or that I do enough," she said, "So I'm always trying to make it better." Strait's continual tinkering with units and activities is admirable for suggests an impulse to keep the subject matter fresh. At the same time, the dissatisfaction that prompts that tinkering suggests that Strait is constantly negotiating and renegotiating the tension among content, time, and tests.

Managing the Tension around Subject Matter

As with views of learners, advocates of subject-specific pedagogy assert the importance of teachers holding thoughtful views of the subject matter they teach. This certainly seems true in the Blair and Strait cases. Blair's view of history as story plays a regular role in the units he teaches.

Similarly, Strait's focus on social history and understanding the complex lives people live bubbles up throughout her teaching. Exploring each teachers' views of the subject is illuminating, but doing so elevates the importance of time and tests. Both Blair and Strait face the problem of negotiating content, time, and tests. The different ways they manage that problem are important for two reasons.

One reason the different ways George Blair and Linda Strait manage content, time, and tests suggests that these factors, while influential, do not push in the same direction (Grant, 1997a; 1997b). Blair has no more time than Strait and his students take no different test than her's. Yet Blair interprets these constraints to mean some quite different than Strait does. He accommodates the problem of time by following his textbook's sequence and framing each unit around a synthetic narrative and illustrative stories. He must choose carefully, however, for there is no limit to the narratives and stories he might create. So he uses the past content of the state tests as a selection guide: Ideas that are not routinely covered on the test are either ignored or dealt with quickly. Linda Strait interprets the constraints of time and tests quite differently. Though she feels the twin pressures of too little time and the press to cover Regents content, Strait assimilates these factors into her larger instructional purpose. She manages the issue of time by constructing big, distinct units based on conceptual themes more so than chronology. In so doing, she frees up some time by reviewing and testing less frequently than most teachers do. Strait manages the need to be attentive to Regents content by studying past exams and working that material into the units she creates. It is not that the test content is unimportant, it is just that her purposes are much broader than the testmakers'. She is not always (or even very often) satisfied with her efforts. Nevertheless, she persists rather than pursue a strategy more like her colleague's.

Linda Strait's unease about the units and activities she creates suggests another reason why the different ways these two teachers manage the tension around subject matter is important. Put simply, Strait's experience implies that the more ambitious a teacher is, the less certain she may be of her efforts (Cohen, 1989; Lortie, 1975). The contrast here between George Blair and Linda Strait could not be sharper: Blair manages the constraints that time and tests pose such that they

present no particular problem. Following the textbook organization and choosing content in relation to the state test provides Blair with a certain pedagogical certainty. He is doing all he feels he can do to honor the subject and prepare his students for the Regents test. By contrast, Linda Strait's uncertainty seems part and parcel of her continuing search for more powerful learning experiences. She knows that there are safer and less demanding approaches. She demurs, but in do so, she exposes herself to considerable professional discomfort.

Implications for Policy and Professional Development

One purpose of this study was to demonstrate the power of subject-specific pedagogy as a means of explaining teachers' instructional practices. Examining closely the ways George Blair and Linda Strait constructed and enacted units on the U.S. civil rights movement nicely illustrated the influence of subject matter and learners. The different ways these two teachers construct their practices, however, elevates a number of questions or tensions. The two kinds of tensions explored here concern the relationship between teachers' goals and expectations of students and among content, time, and tests. These tensions help us understand teachers' practices. They also help us understand some potential problems with educational policy and professional development. By way of a conclusion, then, let me suggest two implications these tensions hold.

Educational policy has been a hot topic since the early 1980's. So too has professional development. Reformers of all stripes have registered their faith in new initiatives and in opportunities for teachers to learn about new approaches to selecting content, developing instruction, and creating assessments. Reaction to reformers' efforts runs the gamut (Grant, 1995a). This study of subject-specific pedagogy, however, raises some issues that problematize the possibilities for classroom change.

One issue is uncertainty. Teachers like Linda Strait who pursue ambitious goals face two kinds of problems. One is with learners who resist; the other is with an unruly content. In each case, the ambitious teacher finds she must constantly negotiate and renegotiate her relationships both with learners and with subject matter. Strait's students balk when she pushes them to consider provocative ideas and when she pushes them to take more responsibility for their

learning. Their resistance does not persuade her to abandon her instructional goals, but it does cause her a considerable amount of discomfort and uncertainty. New curriculum policies may help teachers like Strait do more interesting things with their students. But in doing so, policy will also exacerbate the tensions around learners and subject matter. Moreover, it's unclear that traditional forms of professional development offer much assistance. Teachers like Linda Strait want help, but neither teachers nor professional developers seem to know how to respond (Grant, 1997a).

A second issue is complacency. Teachers who have reached a level of pedagogical comfort pose a different challenge for policymakers and professional developers. For what will induce a teacher like George Blair to push his practice further? Blair has worked hard to hone his material and his delivery and he believes his efforts have paid off: He covers the U.S. history course and he prepares his students to do well on the Regents examination. Reformers might quarrel with both his thin view of learners' abilities and with his reliance on narrative approaches to teaching history. But why should he change anything? He respects his colleague's efforts, but he sees no need to emulate her. New policies, then, have little to say to Blair for unless they directly and explicitly challenge his views of subject matter and learners and the instructional approaches he takes, he can easily ignore them. The same holds for professional development. He (like most other teachers) disdains the majority of inservices and workshops he attends. George Blair hears the buzz of reform, but it does no more than annoy him.

Policymakers and professional developers typically assume that the problem is the classroom teacher (Warren, 1989). They may have it wrong. Good teachers like Linda Strait and George Blair may (or may not) seek assistance. The "problem," however, is less theirs than it is those who would help them change. Policies are typically underspecified in that they rarely give sustained, direct, and explicit instructions to teachers (Cohen, Spillane, Jennings, & Grant, in preparation). Moreover, policies may send mixed messages about either subject matter or learning or both (Grant, 1995b, 1997c). Professional development is problematic as well for despite the time and resources devoted to create teacher learning opportunities, teachers routinely dismiss them

as unhelpful (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1996; Grant, 1997a). Until policymakers and professional developers understand and respond to teachers' views of subject matter and learners and until they start thinking and acting like the kinds of teachers they envision, they will continue to replicate the status quo.

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